

A Full and True Account of a most
Barbarous Murther and Robbery

Committed on the Body of Mrs. *Johannah Williams*,
By one *William de Fray*, a French-man, at a Gravel-Pit near *Barnet*,
in *Hartfordshire*. Likewise of his being apprehended and taken, and committed to *Hartford-Goal*. He Robbed her of a Gold-Watch, together with Three Guineas, and one Five Shilling piece in Money, first having cut her Throat from Ear to Ear, then scarrified her Face, by reason she should not be known. And of his making his Escape towards *Dunstable*.

16. Oct. 1699.

FOR as God hath said, the Murther shall not go unpunished, but that he shall be brought forth either in this World, or that which is to come; so it pleased God to order it, that a Gentleman was walking forth with his Blood-Hounds, that sented the Carcass of this poor Murthered Gentlewoman, whereupon they went forthwith to it, the Gentleman following them, heard them Howl and run too and fro about the Pit, insomuch that he looked down, thereupon he espied a dead Body, which beholding he stood a small time astonished, but presently coming to himself, he run forthwith and made a Hue and Cry, withal satisfying the People in the Town of *Barnet*, that there was a great Murther Committed in the Gravel-Pits aforesaid, and he believed it was but just done, the People hearing him tell this most sad and deplorable Story, run some one way and some another, and some to the Pit, whereupon viewing the Corps, and Cloths of the deceased Murthered Gentlewoman, found her to be one of the Neighbouring Gentry, who was as I am inform'd was Walking a little distance from her House, somewhat Early in the Morning, for a little of the fresh Air, and being pritty well Attired its supposed the Villian had some mistrust of her having Money, and thereupon fell upon with his Blood-thirsty Hands, not being satisfied till he had Committed this most Vile and Detestable Tragedy.

And although many Tragical Actions of this nature, have been often Committed of late, by several Barbarous and Bloody minded Villians, yet this does appear to be as Black as any, we have yet heard off, for could any one think, that a Fellow could have the Impudence to be so Notorious Wicked, as to offer any Violence so near the House as that was, nay, not only so but at broad Day light, when all People were Walking on the Road, one would have thought the late Murther of the Worthy Esq. *Bowles's* Lady were enough for an Example of all Persons whatsoever, and to molifie the Sturdiest and Strongest Heart in the World.

Now the Hue and Cry being out run, this Barbarous and Bloody minded Villain, it forthwith struck such a Terrour to his Spirits, as God had ordered it, that he had not the Power to go any further, but forthwith went into an Inn at *Dunstable*, where he sat down and call'd for a Mugg of Beer, and some Bread and Cheese, which was presently brought him, the Tapster looking earnestly upon him, see him look somewhat dejected, and withal a few drops of Blood upon his Ruffels, thereupon he went to his Master and told him there was a Hue and Cry past the Road about the Murther of one Mrs. *Joannah Williams*, who was found dead this Morning in a Gravel-Pit near *Barnet*, and he believed if this Fellow were fully Examined, they would find it to be him thereupon his Master order'd a Constable forthwith to be call'd; in the meantime the Master of the Inn approached the Company of this most Barbarian-like Villian, saying, *Sir your Servant* and the like, and by way of discourse asked him from whence he came, in a very respectful manner, in so much he could not have the least cause of suspicion, and so he told him from London, likewise he asked him whether he was going, he said to *Chester*, in order to take Shipping for *Dublin*, so the French-man asked him if he should reach to *Stonystratford*, and how many Miles it was to it, the Master of the Inn told him no, it would be to far, and he had better stay all Night.

But in the midst of their Discourse, in come the Constable, who made no more to do, but examined him, at which the poor Monsieur who was so bloodily bent, was mightily astonished; but the Constable forthwith had him before a Justice, who examined him from whence he came? and whither he was going? Likewise, how he came by that Blood on his Ruffels? But he could not give any good account of himself, therefore the Justice ordered a *Mitimus* to be made, and committed him to *Hertford-Goal*; and in his going, confessed the Business to the Constable, who hath got a more particular Account, which will appear against him at his Tryal; It is too long and tedious to repeat the particulars, therefore shall omit, by reason the Tryal will make it more plain to those, who are desirous to hear it.

Notwithstanding the many repeated Examples that have been of late, it will no ways be a warning to leave off their vile and hideous Practices, and they not having the Fear of God before their Eyes, and giving their Minds full and wholly over to Covetousness, and it works so much in the Minds of those who are so hardened in Sin, that they value not the Laws of God and Man, but are grown so lazy, that they care not what wickedness they commit, to accomplish the Desires of their wicked Appetites, which this bloody-minded Villain, as I think to a very high degree shown in this most Bloody Tragedy.

But here this Barbarous Villain, after his Commitment was made, he was forthwith delivered into the Custody of the Goaler, to whom he declared, he was brought up a Gentleman, but the Losses his Friends had sustained in *France*, by being forced to leave their Native Soil, to fly to Charitable *England* for a Refuge, having lost all their Substance, he had nothing to subsist withal, and being in no manner of business, could not tell how to live. Therefore he being weak, not daring to trust God's Providence.

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